

BUDAPEST UNDER FIRE

The Conspiracy of Freedom

PETER SCHMID

I HAD no trouble crossing over from Austria into Hungary on November 1, though the threat of Russian intervention already hung in the air like a black cloud. I had gotten a ride in a truck bringing food, clothing, and medicine from the students of Zurich to the border city of Sopron, where they were to be handed over to the resistance committee. The Hungarian border guards never even bothered to glance inside the truck, much less at my visa. The country was in that anarchic in-between period when one regime was falling and another hadn't taken its place yet.

The truck dropped me off in a school yard in Sopron where there was no mistaking the electric atmosphere of revolution. Young people, looking utterly unmilitary and much more like students than soldiers, stood around with tommy guns under their arms. One of them invited me to drive with him to Budapest in his Pobeda—which a few days before had belonged to a major of the secret police who was subsequently hanged—and he turned out to be an atomic physicist and university instructor. There was another, older man with us in the car, who told me that he had once been a lawyer and later

had spent six years as a political prisoner working in the uranium mines. During his time in the mines he had managed to study English, and after being released he had kept body and soul together by doing translations. He asked me how old I thought he was. "Sixty," I said, looking at his white hair. He laughed bitterly. "I'm only forty-five."

The lawyer's wife was also with us, a pretty young woman who no sooner stepped into the car than she started scooping handfuls of coins out of her handbag and counting them. She had accompanied the two men—both of whom were members of the Revolutionary Committee in Budapest—to Sopron to sell copies of the underground resistance paper *Truth*, and judging from the quantity of coins that came out of the handbag, business had been very good.

It was growing dark fast and we still hadn't budged from the school yard. We had several hand grenades, a rifle, and a tommy gun in our car—an arsenal which as a result of prolonged negotiations between some of the Sopron rebels and my traveling companions dwindled to the one tommy gun. I was amazed time and again by the way these people handled dangerous weapons: a rifle was swung as nonchalantly as a cane, and you might have thought from the way they tossed a hand grenade around that it was no more explosive than a hard-boiled egg.

I began to get rather nervous at the delay all the discussions were causing. Driving at night was risky. Bands of secret police (AVH) were still roaming the countryside trying to lay hands on any rebel vehicles they could find. And there were also the patrols sent out by the freedom fighters to deal with the secret police; just as trigger-

LAST month Hugh Seton-Watson analyzed the causes and significance of the upheaval in satellite Europe ("Eruption in East Europe"). Now PETER SCHMID gives an eyewitness account of revolutionary Budapest under Soviet counter-attack. (The author notes that some details have been altered to protect individuals.) Mr. Schmid, whose home is Switzerland, is a tireless globe-trotter and roving political analyst. He has published books on Spain and Latin America, and in this magazine articles on Indonesia and Germany; one on Japan will appear in a forthcoming issue. His last previous contribution to these pages was "Free Indo-China Fights Against Time" in January 1955.

happy, they were likely to shoot first and ask questions later.

Finally we started out. It was a cold night, but we had to leave the window open so as to fly a large Hungarian flag from the car as we sped along. This, I was told, was the only way we had of identifying ourselves to the freedom fighters patrolling the highways; when, half-frozen, we pulled in the flag and shut the window, it was at the risk of being mistaken for AVH men and getting shot at. I don't know how many times we were stopped on the hundred-mile stretch from the border to Budapest. Every so often, occasionally less than a mile apart, young boys with drawn revolvers jumped into the beam of our headlights, checked our papers, and asked for and offered news. My companions grew visibly more tense at each new report. The Russians, we heard, were drawing a ring of tanks around Budapest. They had occupied all the airfields and were permitting no foreign plane to land or take off. Soviet reinforcements were rolling in from the east over the Rumanian border. The atomic physicist shook his head. "Why all that, if they intend to pull out? They aren't just going to accept defeat. They'll bring in more men and more tanks and smash the revolution," he repeated again and again. "And what will you do?" I asked. "Fight," he answered simply. "If you knew what it was to live through these ten years of abasement, terror, and treason, you would understand. We *can't* go back to the way things were, not now. It has nothing to do with heroism; it's much less dramatic than that. It's simply that there isn't a single one of us who wouldn't rather be dead than go through the hell we were living in again." I tried to reassure him. "The Soviets won't dare," I said. "What about world opinion? De-Stalinization? The concessions in Poland? They're only trying to prevent the revolution from getting completely out of hand; the tanks and the reinforcements are a damper, nothing more." This was exactly the sort of thing that the military attachés of the British and American embassies in Budapest were saying to Western journalists.

"Nothing that can't be explained by the requirements of an orderly withdrawal. . . ." But the Hungarians knew better.

BUDAPEST gave me the sense of a faded plant which, after years of neglect, someone had remembered to water again. To be sure, the revolution had been a terrible destroyer. Burnt-out and blasted Russian tanks still lay in streets whose paving stones had been clawed up by the steel treads. Broken window glass covered the asphalt of Kossuth Lajos Utca with a crystal carpet over which the fallen trolley cable wound like a thin black snake. But the destruction was only material, not human. And though the season was fall, the feeling was spring.

A look of triumph, though shadowed with apprehension, was on every face. The revolution had won, for the time being. The Soviets were defeated, for the moment. On the walls of houses all around the city and on the few still intact shop windows the legend "Russians, go home!" had been daubed in great white letters. In front of bookstores and libraries there were burning heaps of Communist literature. Whole rows of streets were hung with flags that had big round holes cut out of the center where the Soviet symbol had once been emblazoned. In the square outside the National Theater I saw a crowd of young people swarming around the torso of a huge fallen statue of Stalin like ants around a worm. They hacked away at the metal with saws, files, hammers, and pliers, and whenever someone managed to rip a piece off he would rush down the square waving his souvenir and laughing. As if there were no Russian tanks standing before the gates of the city. But Stalin's was not the only monument that fell victim to the mockery and defiance of the people. Dimitrov's metal head dangled in a noose from a nearby tree, bearing the inscription "The end of his career," while a young student performed oratorical capers on the empty pedestal.

As I watched all this, I thought of the saying, "In all other countries the situation may be serious, but never desperate; in Hun-

gary it is always desperate, but never serious." But for once in Hungary there were signs of seriousness. Crowds of housewives were lined up at the food stores, and they did not limit their purchases to immediate needs. Women who had scraped up enough money were struggling home from the market with a goose in each hand, against the uncertain days ahead.

An even longer line had formed in front of the municipal pawnshop. In impoverished Hungary one pawned one's winter wardrobe in the summer and one's summer things in the winter; now people flocked by the hundreds and thousands to redeem their winter clothes. "In 1944 the Russians looted all the pawnshops," someone in the queue told me. "So we're taking our things out now before it's too late." Women coming out of the shop staggered under the bundles of clothes and the valises they had to carry home. Fortunately the buses were running again. Things were quickly getting back to normal.

SATURDAY afternoon I took the trolley to the great Csepel iron and steel works, which employed some 40,000 workers and had emerged as one of the principal centers of the revolution. Once the plant had been known as the Rakosi Works, but shortly before the revolution, when the dictator fell, the name had been removed from the front gates and now there was only the shadowy outline of the letters to be made out. I was admitted without any fuss and conducted to the manager's office, where I found the new manager talking to a man armed with a tommy gun. Actually he was not the manager, but an engineer and the president of the Workers' Council which had taken over the plant, and he shared the office with an old white-haired machinist also representing the Workers' Council. Both men told me frankly that they had been members of the Communist party, but that seemed to make no difference to anyone; what mattered was whether you had behaved decently. Even before the revolution everyone had really known where everyone else stood as far as

the Russians were concerned. At the first crack of the shots fired by the AVH at demonstrating students on October 23, the ranks of decent Hungarians had rallied as if on signal against the Russians and their creatures.

The old machinist led me through the shops, which were now deserted; in the morning there had been a bit of activity to prepare for the resumption of work on Monday. The floor of the factory was littered with torn-up Communist placards and pictures of Lenin (by the time the revolution started, all the pictures of Stalin had already disappeared). The offices of the Communist party overseers were a shambles: the files lay scattered and torn on the floor. A couple of workers had found their own files in the rubbish, and as they studied the ideological fairy tales that the deposed Communist bosses had woven around them, their faces took on a queer look that was partly made up of the fear they had once felt and partly of a kind of boyish amusement.

It was amazing how trustfully all the doors and hearts of Hungary were thrown wide open to a foreigner from the West. There was no need to look for things to write about; people were eager to show you places worth seeing; complete strangers would spend half days on end taking you around without asking for a penny. It was as if, as a Westerner, you were a member of a gigantic conspiracy called freedom. When I was driving one time through the streets in the car of an American friend that had the Stars and Stripes tied over the radiator, a crowd gathered around us at every stop. A woman tossed flowers down at us from her window. Hungary gave her allegiance to the West with an almost child-like exuberance.

Genuine revolutions usually breed a tremendous spiritual elation, an élan that amounts to a kind of moral intoxication. The Hungarian revolution was no exception. Hundreds of shop windows had been smashed during the fighting, yet the displays in the show cases remained untouched. You had only to reach out your hand to gather a

treasure, but no one did. There were no thieves, no looters. Even the professional criminals forebore, and kept from sullyng the purity of the struggle. Here and there on the streets large open boxes, inscribed with an appeal for funds to help the families of freedom fighters who had fallen, stood exposed with substantial sums of money in them. Nobody was needed to watch them. Nobody would have dared lay hands on offerings like these.

AT 5 A.M. on Sunday I was awakened in my hotel by a loud sharp droning in the street. Hurrying to the window, I saw a column of tanks racing through the sleeping street below, and in the distance I could hear artillery pieces going off. This was it. My walk through the streets of Budapest that Sunday morning was one of the most sinister I have ever taken. It was a beautiful autumn day, with the sun playing warmly on the golden foliage of the trees. As yet, there were hardly any tanks around; the only real disturbance was the sound of an isolated machine gun, stuttering from one direction or another. Later on, when whole droves of tanks came rolling through the streets spitting fire, the people were strangely calm. But on that Sunday morning fear was in the air. Families stood in the doorways of their houses with ashen faces, hardly speaking; they just stood there listening to the machine guns and waiting. Here and there I spotted a figure wheeling a barrow piled high with household goods, hurrying some place where it might be safer.

At the street corners young men and women were tearing up the pavement and erecting barricades with the heavy stones. The faces of the pretty girls (they were students) were distorted with the unaccustomed exertion, their hair hanging in dank strands, their eyes glazed as if in a trance. You could see that it never occurred to them that it was impossible to fight tanks with tommy guns and to try to do so was suicidal madness, that the only rational course was to yield to superior force. What the atomic physicist had told me in the car was true.

These people would rather suffer death than live in slavery; freedom or death was no phrase to them, it was a cold determination. When a man has lost the fear of death, as the Hungarians had, he is ready to do the impossible—as the Hungarians very nearly did.

Those of us who did not actually see the fighting and heard only the noises of war—during the first two days of the Soviet intervention, like most of my colleagues, I stayed behind the walls of my embassy—received an over-dramatic impression of the struggle for Budapest, though it was, heaven knows, furious and tragic enough. On Monday morning, hearing the continuous roar of heavy guns and seeing the dense columns of smoke rising from the nearby East Station, I expected to see a city in ruins when it was all over, some such scene as one remembered all too vividly from World War II. But when I ventured out on Tuesday I found surprisingly little damage even in the immediate area of the fighting. At certain key points where there had been systematic resistance and a pitched battle had been fought, the destruction was substantial, particularly on the main avenues and in the Ring, which lay rubble-strewn and deserted under the threatening guns of stationary tanks. But off on the side streets life was going on much as usual. Fewer people were hiding in cellars than I would have expected, chiefly women and children. The older men, fathers of families who left the fighting to their younger brothers and sons, walked about in the streets and watched from around the corner of a house whenever they happened on a skirmish. Men and women stood in endless queues before the doors of bakeries, the only branch of the food industry that kept working even during the fiercest fighting. Now and then, when a tank rolled past, the hordes of shoppers and spectators would scurry into the nearest cellar or down a side street, only to reappear when it was safe again.

To a foreigner like myself, this crowd of people swaying on the margin of the fight-

ing was enormously helpful. There are no maps of Budapest in the stationery stores—a wonderful example of Communist efficiency—and without the help of the crowd I should probably have blundered my way right into the maw of a Soviet tank. But the people in the street formed a sort of conspiratorial fellowship briefing one another on the shifting situation. What was the best way to get to X, someone wanted to know. Take such-and-such a street, but make sure you move through it on the double—it's a bit dangerous. The next block is quiet, but a tank has its guns trained on the one after that and shoots at anything that moves. Eight people have already been killed there—you can still see the pools of blood. The only way to get through is to stop a Red Cross ambulance and have the driver make a dash for it before the Russians can react. But of course, the truck has to go so fast that that way you risk getting your neck broken in a smashup.

The misuse of the Red Cross by both sides, the AVH as well as the freedom fighters, drew down the danger of attack from Russian machine guns on every vehicle marked with it. And indeed, the ambulance drivers who drove wounded freedom fighters through the hail of bullets, and who were eventually wiped out almost to the last man and the last vehicle, were perhaps the most courageous heroes of this fight for freedom. Engines and brakes were forever giving out under the mad speed at which the cars careened around. I was in one of them when it broke down right in the middle of a deadly crossroads, and I had to creep slowly out on my belly like a snail. The Russian gunner guarding the spot must have been asleep; otherwise I would not be writing these lines now.

OFFICIAL estimates after the fighting ended put the number of dwelling units destroyed at 40,000, or less than 10 per cent of the total number of dwelling units in this city of approximately a million and three-quarters. Considering everything, this wasn't a great deal. Tanks are not nearly so effec-

tive as aerial bombardment in laying a city waste. The high-speed projectiles fired by their cannon can go through almost anything, but they have little explosive force. I saw many apartments where the furniture was tossed about by a single shot, but where the effective damage was limited to a hole in the wall that could easily be stopped up. I also had the impression that the Russian command was taking it easy on Budapest. No bombers were sent over (for all the threats that were made) and infantry troops, which could have caused a lot of damage with flame-throwers, were used very sparingly. And even the tanks, the chief Soviet weapon for putting down the revolution, only fired on civilians in certain areas; anyone who came across a tank column outside its area of operations could watch it with impunity from the sidewalk without taking cover. Budapest, after all, was not an enemy city which the Russians aimed at conquering and razing to the ground; it was the capital of an allied state which had called on the Soviet Union for help against the "fascists" and "reactionaries." The tanks' objective was simply to smash "isolated nests of resistance." When the city became one huge nest of resistance, the Russians were forced to be more brutal than they really intended. As I indicated above, there was, unfortunately, justification in many cases for the firing on ambulances, nor can it be denied that many of the hospitals attacked had been converted into bases of operations by the partisans.

When I brought this matter up to some of the friends I had made among the freedom fighters, pointing out the danger and irresponsibility of such actions, they simply grinned disarmingly, like children, and turned the whole subject aside with an excuse. They almost seemed to regard the fighting as a game of cops and robbers—desperate but never serious, as the saying has it. A famous Hungarian psychologist to whom I expostulated over this curious attitude looked at me and shrugged: "All heroes are children," he said.

But the apparent hesitation of the Soviet

command to wage an all-out campaign was as nothing compared with the reluctance of the ordinary Russian soldier to slaughter helpless civilians. I spoke to many Soviet troops, wounded men in the hospitals and later on soldiers standing guard in the streets, and their reaction was unanimous: "*Krieg nix gut, will heim*" ("War no good, want to go home"). A sergeant-major confessed to me that only the pistols of the officers kept the men in line.

There may be some connection between the attitude of the Soviet troops and the fact that the battle was fought on the Russian side mainly by unsupported tanks, in spite of the fact that these had already shown themselves in the first fighting to be extremely vulnerable in the narrow streets of Budapest. Tanks can accomplish relatively little in the labyrinthine interior of a city against an embattled populace. In the company of the freedom fighters, I climbed the ladders they had put up and crept through the passageways with which they had honey-combed certain blocks of houses to enable them to move around at will. Budapest, moreover, which since the time of the Turks has been mined by a network of subterranean tunnels, is ideally suited for partisan warfare. When the fight became too hot in one spot, a partisan would simply cache his weapons and disappear without a trace, re-emerging in another street as a harmless citizen. The Russian tanks commanded the broad avenues where they could bring their machine guns and cannon to bear, but another story was told in the side streets. The same tactics the Communists had developed with such success against the "reactionaries" and "colonialists" in China and Vietnam were here being used against them.

All this also helps explain why Hungarian losses during the actual fighting were so much smaller than the exaggerated estimates that appeared in the world press. I visited the partisan unit at the East Station several times; after three days of fighting their casualties came to only 18 dead and 28 wounded out of a total strength of 250 men. The big Petöfy Hospital in this sector, which

had evacuated its civilian patients to the cellar and which the freedom fighters used as a field hospital until it was shelled and occupied by the Soviets on November 8, had no trouble accommodating all the wounded.

I cannot emphasize enough the necessity for discounting the lurid stories about heaps of corpses and blood flowing in the gutters of Budapest with which sensation-hungry journalists filled their dispatches. The partisan command post in a building near the East Station could almost be described as cozy. Officially, it was located in the cellar, but the commandant, an engineer by profession, had moved upstairs to a comfortable apartment where he kept in touch with his subordinates by telephone—which functioned without a hitch throughout the whole battle, as did the light and water services. It was possible to pick up the phone, dial a sector where a fight was raging, and then issue one's orders. I asked the engineer: "Isn't that dangerous? All they have to do is listen in at the telephone exchange and send one of their tanks out after you." But Russian intelligence service was apparently as faulty as the Hungarians were careless.

THE men with whom I sat in this command post were all young. They ranged from boys of fourteen, who acted as messengers and observers and kept bursting in breathlessly to give the commandant their reports, to the commandant himself and his deputy, an architect. Both men had left wives and infant children in order to lead the struggle, and they proudly showed me snapshots of their families, but I could find not the slightest trace of concern on their faces over the possible consequences of their decision.

A sort of forced optimism reigned in the post. When they asked me how I thought the revolution was going, they clearly expected me to tell them that it would unfailingly triumph. They had plenty of food. While outside the civilian population was already beginning to go hungry, the partisans' table was laden with roast goose, ham, and sandwiches, which came partly from

requisitioned stocks and partly from the peasants of the surrounding area, who sneaked provisions in at night as their contribution to the struggle. The munitions supply was also pretty good, if one could believe the commandant. The partisans used "Molotov cocktails"—bottles of gasoline ignited by a fuse—against the tanks. As the Russian soldiers clambered out of the burning vehicles, they would be mowed down by tommy guns, after which the partisans would strip the tanks and the dead of their weapons and ammunition. "We get more weapons every day," boasted the commandant. "The Russians bring them to us. We can go on resisting this way indefinitely."

And then there was the Hungarians' hope in the UN. Again and again on the street I was surrounded by passers-by with the question: "When is the UN sending troops? Why aren't they sending us weapons?" When I answered—as I had to—that they could probably count on nothing more than diplomatic support, despair crept over their faces. These people had given their allegiance to the West so enthusiastically and unquestioningly that they felt the free world's impotence as a betrayal. Almost overnight, from Tuesday to Wednesday, the élan of the rebels seemed to fade away. The engineer and the architect went around their headquarters with tired, bloodshot eyes—they had begun to drink. The engineer-commandant had to spend hours arguing with subordinates who no longer wanted to obey his orders. "That is the tragedy of us Hungarians," he said bitterly. "We are a nation of heroes, but only as individuals. When we need to make a common effort, we immediately split up into factions. Maybe I'll give up my command tomorrow." I spent the night in an atmosphere of foreboding and left the command post early Thursday morning. It was a good thing I did: a few hours later the Soviet tanks zeroed in on it and its treacherous telephone.

BUT on that Wednesday evening I met someone who revealed to me the hope that still burned fiercely at the heart of the

revolutionary movement. Late at night the editor of *Truth* slipped in with one of his co-workers. The editorial office, located below us on the Ring, had been under fire all day long from eighteen Soviet tanks, and it was only by heroic sacrifices that they had managed to print the last edition of 15,000 copies and carry it out through subterranean passages. The copies were now piled up ready to be distributed through the city by "ambulances" the next day. The man accompanying the editor, a young poet (one of his poems took the place of a lead article in the paper) and a colleague of the Marxist philosopher Georg Lukacs, was one of the leading spirits among the insurgent intellectuals. He had spent the whole day conferring with his group, and he reported that, in view of the enemy's overwhelming strength and the pitifully scanty supply of food and fuel for the civilian population, they had given up any idea of resistance to the death. It would be better, they thought now, to save the lives of the freedom fighters who could then carry on the struggle by other, political, means. Had not the general strike already shown itself to be a more effective revolutionary weapon than the tommy gun? At the moment of crisis a new insight and a new source of strength had come to this young poet.

It seemed to me that he represented an interesting new type that was appearing in considerable numbers among the young people not only of Hungary but also of the other satellite countries. He had grown up a Marxist under the Communist regime and it was the Marxist in him, not any convert to liberalism, capitalism, or Western democracy, that had rebelled against Communist despotism. The Communists, he argued, were bad Marxists if they believed that they could suppress a historical development like the satellite freedom movements by the violent methods of colonialism. "As a true Marxist I believe in the inevitability of historical processes," he told me. "We know perfectly well what a wave of terror and Stalinist repression will be let loose on us. But repression cannot cancel the laws of history, which

are working in our favor." "Then will you surrender?" I asked quietly. "Surrender?" he laughed. "We don't need to do that. You know how the revolution broke out—spontaneously, without any kind of preparation, when the police fired on our students; leadership and organization sprang up over night. Well, we'll scatter now just as spontaneously as we came together. We'll bury our weapons and those of us who haven't exposed ourselves too much can change back into civilians and lose ourselves in the crowd. The revolution can't die; it will play dead and await its moment to rise again. Right now, there's no longer any chance of winning."

I will never forget that midnight moment in the partisan headquarters. The tired commanders with their bloodshot eyes were still insisting that they could hold out to judgment day. But there was this sparkling young face, full of genuine faith in the strength even of the weak. The majority of the young Hungarian rebels were like that—never for an instant suggesting pathos, buoyed up by an intractable idealism, calmly heroic, as if what they were doing was the most natural thing in the world.

BUT there were also others mixed up in the revolution. When the Communists charged that the revolutionary movement had fallen into the hands of reactionaries and fascists, they were telling one of their many lies. Still, there were such elements among the rebels. Anti-Communists themselves acknowledged that Cardinal Mindszenty's speech with its reactionary echoes was a catastrophe. But worse than that was the undercurrent of anti-Semitism that I detected in revolutionary Hungary. On November 2, I stood watching a group of freedom fighters equipped with steam shovels digging huge holes in the ground in front of what had been the headquarters of the Communist party. They were trying to get at a group of AVH men who had taken refuge in one of the subterranean passages with a number of political prisoners. One of the diggers came up to me apropos of

nothing and began to insist that the Jews should be exterminated because they had brought Communism to Hungary. Rakosi, Gerö, the former police chief Peter Gabor, and the majority of the AVH—they were all Jews, he said. I ran into another spontaneous expression of anti-Semitism in the countryside when I was driving back to Vienna. Near a place called Tata our car was stopped while tanks went rolling by for hours on end. Two brutal-faced fellows carrying tommy guns who were members of the AVH (which by then was again, more or less in control) told us that the tanks were off on an action against "robbers." While we stood freezing in the dusk, watching the endless passage of the tanks and asking ourselves whether we would have to wait all night to get through, a couple of emaciated peasant boys slipped up to our car from behind. "The Russians are swine," they whispered to us, "and that big AVH over there is a Jew." A Russian soldier chased them away. What a sense of grievance those boys must have felt toward the Jews to risk making such a comment under those circumstances!

The documents released by the Yugoslav government in the case of Imre Nagy also indicate how serious was the danger of a pogrom in revolutionary Hungary. They show Zoltan Szanto, a member of the Nagy group, negotiating as early as November 2 with the Yugoslav legation for asylum in case of a pogrom. In the end, of course, it was the Soviets against whom the Nagy people had to seek protection in the Yugoslav embassy.

IT MAY seem a cruel historical accident that Poland should be moving gradually toward liberation without bloodshed, while Hungary faces renewed terror and occupation. Yet the contrast is not entirely accidental. Poland, under the mild dictatorship ruling between the two world wars, was able to establish certain democratic traditions and above all a strong labor movement, conditions which were almost completely lacking in Hungary. This, and the absence of a na-

tional Communist of the stature of Gomulka—Rajk can be mourned, but not resurrected—are probably among the chief reasons why the Hungarian revolution burst its bounds and drew down the Russian counter-attack. The Workers' Councils had to try and turn themselves into a genuine labor *movement* under the most difficult circumstances, in the very midst of their struggle with the Soviet quisling, Kadar.

All this, however, may serve to educate the Hungarians, who are easily diverted down emotional byways, as to what things are important and possible and what things illusions and gestures. The speed with which the politicians of the pre-war period reformed their old parties and started up their old squabbles, as if nothing whatever had happened in all the postwar years, makes one wonder whether the revolution was not in danger of going astray and ultimately turning into a restoration.

The political struggle which the revolutionaries now must wage will exact further tragic sacrifices. But the young workers and

students, who so far have known only how to die on the barricades, will have to develop a more conscious and united opposition, one that in time will be qualified to take power and govern. For the uncertainty with which the Soviets now face the consequences of their Stalinist rage, like a bull in a china shop unable to move a step without impaling itself on the splinters, shows that Stalinism is no more capable than colonialism of breaking the will of a people. The brutality of the Soviet intervention has also destroyed any possibility of getting the Hungarians to collaborate with Soviet men and purposes. No Hungarian of standing can ever again work with the Soviets. The Kaders still cooperating do so more or less involuntarily, or because past association with the Russians leaves them no choice.

In this sense the dead of Budapest have not died in vain. They have created a legend that will keep the idea of resistance alive, a legend of children who were able to halt the strongest land army in the world with their bare hands.